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## New report confirms high demand for health care workers

OLYMPIA – Health care practitioners top the list of jobs currently in high demand in Washington, according to a new report released today by the Washington State Employment Security Department.

Registered nurses are in demand more than any other occupation, with an estimated 2,565 job openings reported late last year – nearly 10 percent of all vacancies across the state. These positions offered a median hourly wage ranging from \$17.75 in rural Eastern Washington to \$21.00 in King County.

Nursing aides, also known as orderlies, were second in demand with 1,260 vacancies while licensed practical nurses, with 476 openings, ranked seventh on the list.

“The high number of job openings for registered nurses, aides, and licensed practical nurses highlighted in this report emphasizes the continued strong demand for skilled labor in the health care sector,” said Employment Security Commissioner Sylvia P. Mundy.

Findings are based on a survey of Washington employers.

Of the 26,378 job openings in all industries identified by the survey, half were full time and 88 percent were permanent positions. Most openings were clustered in King County, which also has the state’s highest concentration of workers.

The median wage offered for vacant positions was \$11.78 per hour. Not surprisingly, pay in most cases was linked with education experience. Jobs with no education requirements offered a median of \$7.55 per hour, compared to \$21.68 for positions requiring a graduate or professional degree.

Of all job openings, 34 percent required education beyond high school, 41 percent required a professional license or certificate, and 56 percent required related work experience.

Among jobs requiring minimal education, openings were found most often for retail sales staff, meat cutters, office clerks, security guards, and cashiers.

(More)

“Job openings in these occupations would be expected no matter the state of the economy,” Mundy said. “People tend to come and go more readily from entry-level and sales positions than in other job groups, so there are typically many vacancies. Meat cutters tend to be subject to seasonal hiring, which is why we would expect large numbers of openings at certain times of the year. And with the increase in security concerns nationwide, we are not surprised to see security guards near the top of the list of job vacancies.”

The findings are from the *Washington State Job Vacancy and Employee Benefits Survey* conducted by the Washington State Employment Security Department’s Labor Market and Economic Analysis Branch. Surveys were sent to more than 10,700 Washington firms late last year, with valid responses received from about 6,400. Replies were used to estimate findings for all Washington employers.

Job vacancy results will be updated twice annually. The report is available online at <http://www.workforceexplorer.com/>; click on “Economy.” Printed copies can be obtained by calling Carolyn Cummins at (360) 438-4814.

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